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BABY BOTTLE TOOTH DECAY

Baby's teeth are susceptible to decay or cavities as soon as they appear. By the time the decay is noticed, it may be too late to save the teeth. Decay in infants and young children is known as Baby Bottle Tooth Decay.

THE GOOD NEWS IS: BABY BOTTLE TOOTH DECAY IS PREVENTABLE!

What is baby bottle tooth decay and how does it happen?

1. Baby bottle tooth decay is a dental condition that can destroy the teeth of an infant or young child.
2. It occurs when a child's teeth are frequently exposed to sugary liquids like milk, breast milk, formula or juice for long or frequent periods of time.

Can all the teeth be affected?

1. The most common teeth damaged are the upper front teeth but other's can be also.
2. The first baby teeth are important in helping your child learn to chew food, speak clearly, and look attractive.
3. Decay in the primary teeth can cause pain, and may affect your child's permanent teeth.
4. It's not just what children drink, but how often and how long the teeth are exposed to the liquids.
5. Especially harmful is frequently offering a bottle or sippy cup during naps or nighttime.
6. During sleep, saliva decreases allowing liquids to pool around the teeth for long periods, and greatly increasing the risk of tooth decay.

What can parents do to prevent baby bottle tooth decay?

1. **Never** allow your child to fall asleep breast-feeding, with a bottle or cup filled with milk, juice, formula or sweet liquids.
2. **Never** offer a pacifier dipped in sugar or honey.
3. Offer him water or a clean pacifier for bedtime.
4. Begin to brush your child's teeth as soon as the first one appears and after snacks, meals and especially at bedtime.
5. Schedule your child's first dental visit early (1-3 yrs) to establish a positive relationship with the dentist.
6. Check your child's teeth regularly and watch for white spots, or stained teeth.